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from an inner edge of the frame, which inner edge abuts the floor segment and defines an aperture therein.--

~~43~~
~~--44.~~ A lid as set forth in claim 20, 21, 22 or 39, wherein the barrier is a floor, a wall or a desktop.--

~~44~~
~~--45.~~ An access panel as set forth in claim 30 or 31, wherein the barrier is a floor, a wall or a desktop.--

REMARKS

Claims 8 through 11, 15 through 17, 19, 23 through 29 and 34 through 38 have been cancelled. Claims 1 through 7, 12 through 14, 18, 20 through 22, 30 through 33, 39 and 40 have been amended. Claims 41 through 45 have been added. Claims 1 through 7, 12 through 14, 18, 20 through 22, 30 through 33, and 39 through 45 remain in this application for active consideration.

In the outstanding official action of November 4, 2002, the examiner has objected to the drawings, objected to claims 8, 10 through 18, 26 through 28 and 32, rejected claims 1 through 10, 19 through 25 and 29 through 37 under 35 U.S.C. §112, rejected claims 1, 2, 19, 20, 30 and 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) and rejected claims 3 through 10, 21 through 25, 29 and 35 through 37 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Applicants respectfully traverse the stated objections and rejections and submit that in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, this application is now in condition for allowance.

With regard to the objection to the drawings, a marked-up copy of Figure 1 showing an appropriate proposed correction in red adding the reference numeral 102 is attached. In addition, marked-up copies of Figures 2a and 3 are attached showing proposed corrections in

red to correct a couple of minor typographical errors and omissions. It is respectfully requested that the examiner approve the corrections shown in red on the attached marked-up copies.

Regarding the objections to the original claims, claims 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 26 through 28 and 35 have all been cancelled and claims 13, 14, 17 and 18 have all been amended so as to avoid any improper multiple dependencies. It is believed that the objection to original independent claim 12 on the basis of reciting an improper multiple dependency is unfounded. In addition, it is believed that it is claim 35, rather than claim 32 that should have been objected to on the stated basis of a double recitation of the phrase "of the lid."

With regard to the rejection of claims 1 through 10, 19 through 25 and 29 through 37 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, claims 8 through 10, 19, 23 through 25, 29 and 34 through 37 have all been cancelled. In addition, claims 1 through 7, 20 through 22 and 30 through 33 have all been amended so comply fully with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

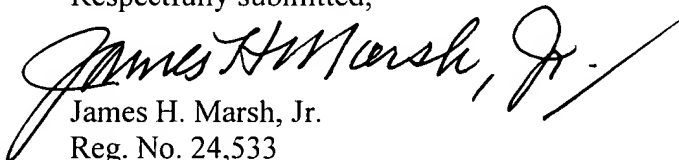
Regarding the art rejections, remaining claims 1, 2, 20 and 30 were rejected as being anticipated by Riedy et al., remaining claims 3 through 7 and 21 were rejected as being unpatentable over Riedy et al., and remaining claim 22 was rejected as being unpatentable over Riedy et al. in view of UK Patent Publication GB 2229222. But the date of Riedy et al. as a reference under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) can be no earlier than its November 5, 1999 filing date, whereas the claims remaining in this application are fully supported by and therefore entitled to the priority of Australian application no. PP 9550 filed March 31, 1999. In this latter regard, it is to be noted that an appropriate claim for priority has been made in this application in the joint declaration signed by the inventors and filed on February 12, 2002. In addition, and pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.55(a)(1)(ii), an appropriate claim for priority was timely made and a certified copy

of the priority application was timely filed in international application PCT/AU00/00280, of which the present application is a national stage application. A copy of Australian application no. PP 9550 is enclosed for the convenience of the examiner. Since Riedy et al. is not prior art against the present application, all prior art rejections based thereon should be withdrawn.

Fewer claims remain in this application than when the same was originally filed. Accordingly, it is submitted that no additional filing fee is due as a result of the foregoing amendments.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it submitted that it is clear that the claims remaining for active consideration in this application are free of the cited art, in full compliance with the patent statutes, rules and regulations regarding formalities, and in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable action at an early date will be appreciated. If the examiner is of the view that any issue remains unresolved, it is respectfully suggested that applicants' undersigned attorney may be contacted by telephone at the number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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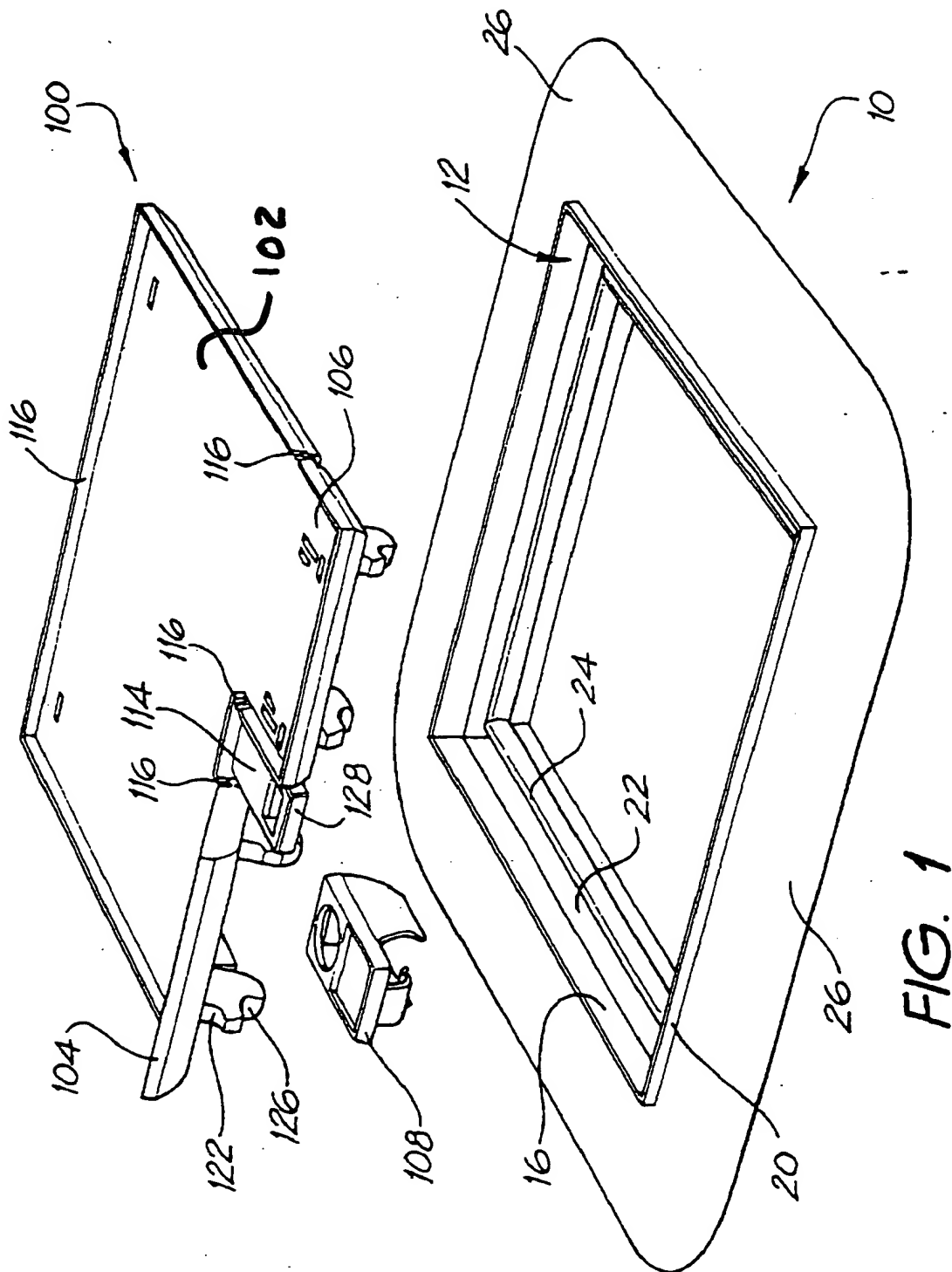


FIG. 1

Substitute Sheet
(Rule 26) RO/AU

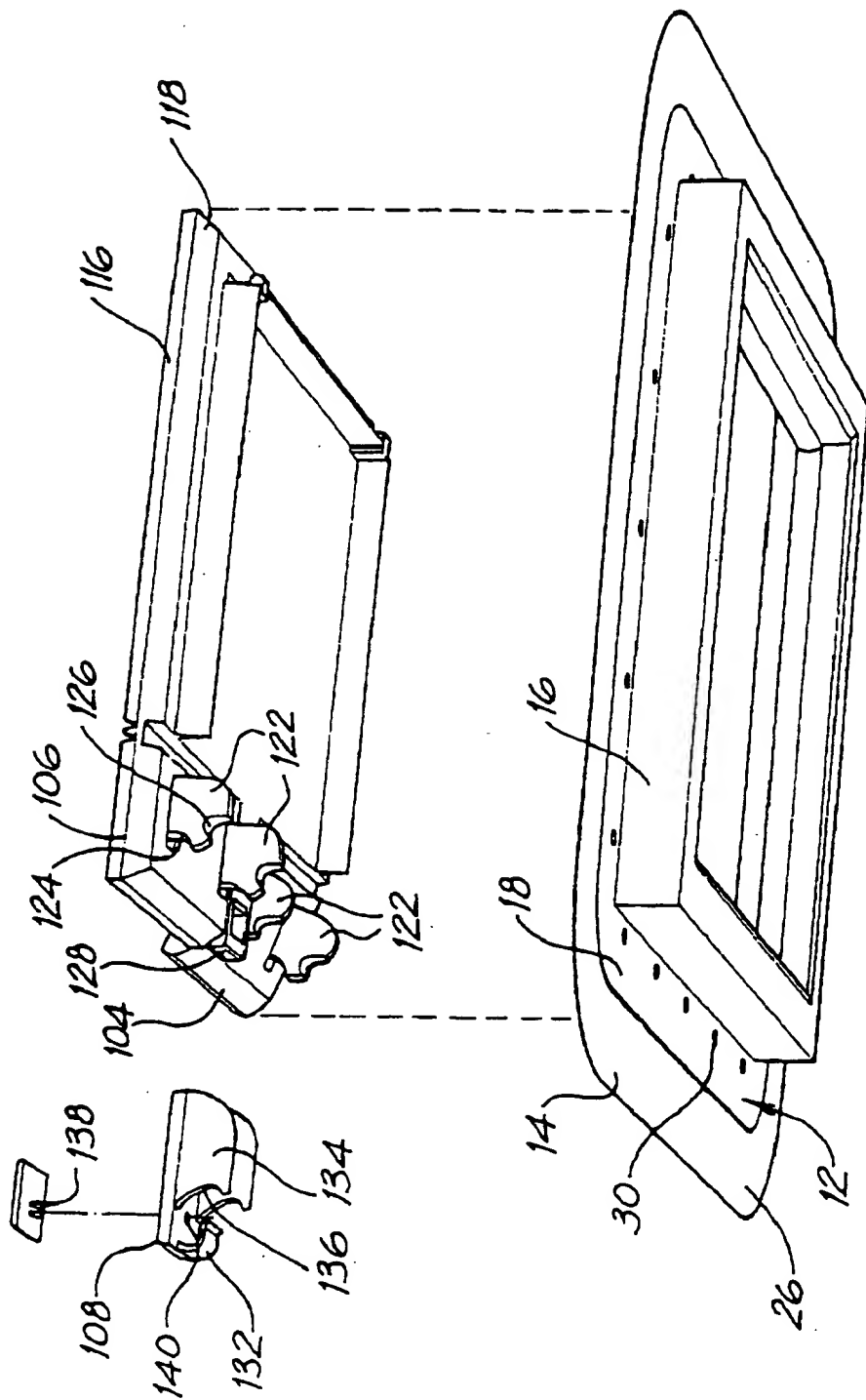


FIG. 2

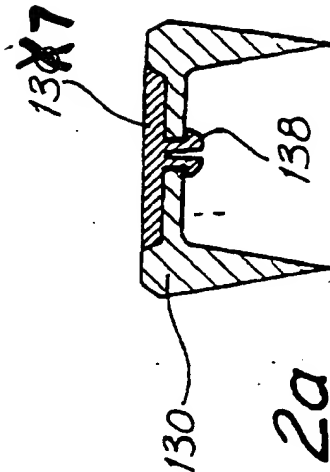


FIG. 2a

Substitute Sheet
(Rule 26) RO/AU

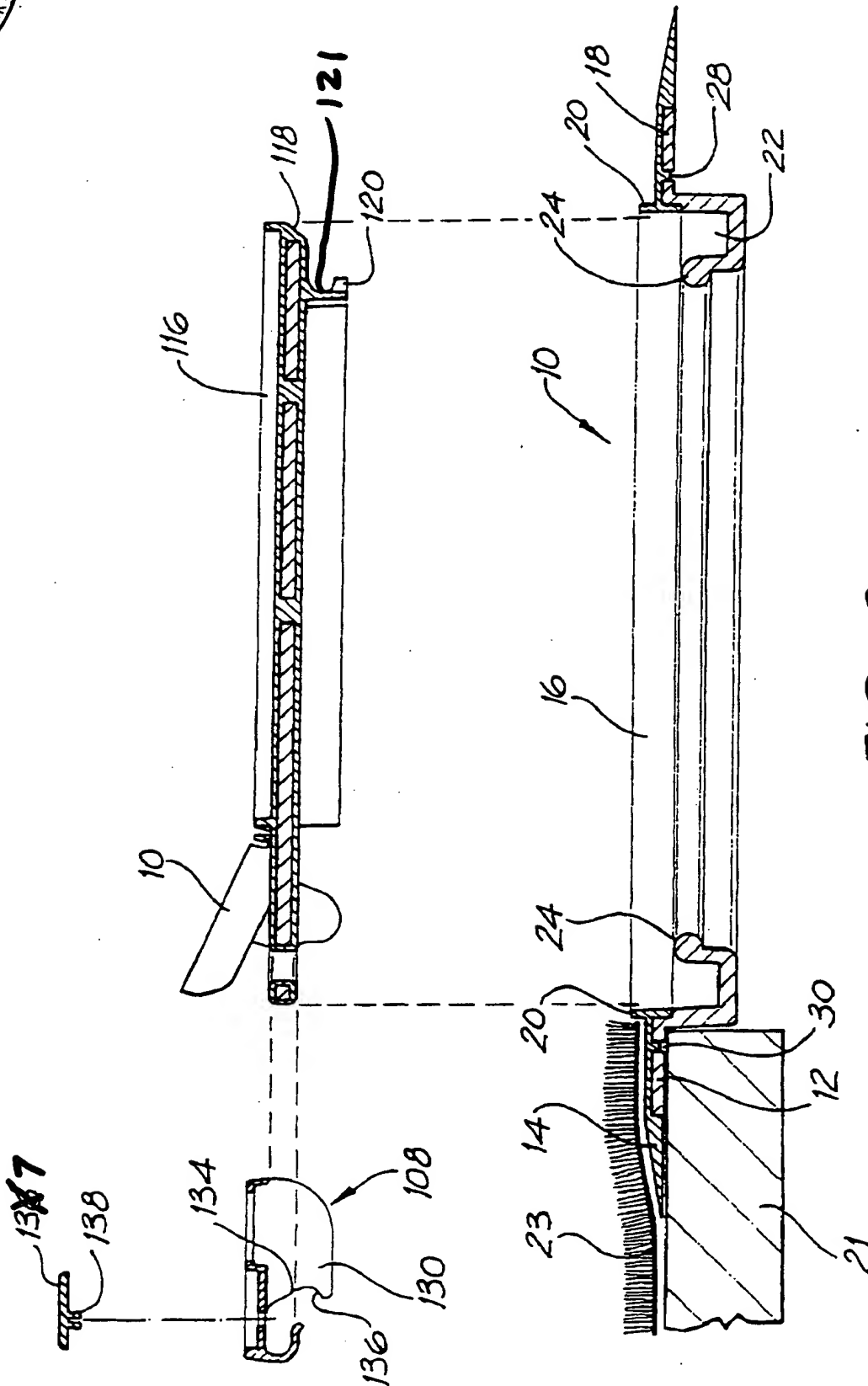
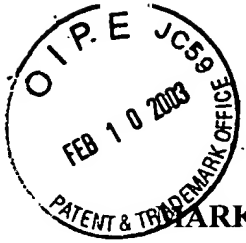


FIG. 3

Substitute Sheet
(Rule 26) RO/AU



MARKED-UP SET OF AMENDED CLAIMS:

1. (ONCE AMENDED) Structure providing access to an area beneath a [A]
floor, said structure comprising:

[having] a segment of a floor having an upper surface and [covering and] an
opening [in the floor,] therethrough;

a floor covering on said upper surface of said floor segment;

an access panel [for] providing access to said area [cables, services or the like]
through [the] said opening, [the] said access panel including a floor frame located in the
opening[,] and a lid supported on the frame, [the] said frame [having] including a support flange
extending [around its periphery] therearound, said [wherein the] support flange being disposed
so as to extend outwardly from the frame [extends] between the floor covering and the upper
surface of the floor segment.

2. (ONCE AMENDED) Structure [A floor] as [claimed] set forth in claim 1,
wherein the flange [provides] includes a ramped edge.

3. (ONCE AMENDED) Structure [A floor] as [claimed] set forth in claim 1,
wherein the flange comprises [is formed in] two abutting parts formed from respective different
materials.

4. (ONCE AMENDED) A rigid structural frame for an access panel [comprising
a rigid structural for supporting an outlet box or the like] providing access through a floor
segment, said [the] frame including a tapered, outwardly extending [outer edge or] flange
[wherein the flange] having a thickness which tapers substantially uniformly over a distance of at
least 10[, and preferably, 20] times the maximum thickness of the flange.

5. (ONCE AMENDED) [A frame] Structure for an access panel comprising [-] a rigid structural frame[, defining] having an outer edge[;] and a tapered flange formed from a soft non structural material[, typically a flexible polymeric material,] disposed in abutting [the] relationship to said outer edge.

6. (ONCE AMENDED) [A frame] Structure as [claimed] set forth in claim 5, wherein the flange is formed from a flexible polymeric material, and the same is attached to and disposed in overlying relationship to the outer edge.

7. (ONCE AMENDED) [A frame] Structure as [claimed] set forth in claim 6, wherein the [flexible polymeric material] flange is separate from the outer edge and [defines] presents a step portion arranged to mate with a corresponding recess on the outer edge.

12. (ONCE AMENDED) Structure comprising [A] (1) a floor segment, [having] (2) a floor covering[, on said floor segment, (3) a floor frame for an access panel providing access through said floor segment, said frame having a support flange extending around the periphery [of the frame] thereof, and (4) a lid supported on the frame, wherein the highest [part] parts of the frame and lid do not project above[, and are preferably below] the floor covering.

13. (ONCE AMENDED) A frame as [claimed] set forth in [any one of claims] claim 4 [to] wherein the frame defines] including a central, lid closable aperture and an upstanding rib which extends around [a] said central aperture [of the frame, which aperture is closable by a lid], [the] said rib being disposed between [the] a peripheral edge of the flange and the central aperture[, and [wherein the upstanding rib] being arranged and located such that the same does not project above[, and are preferably below, the load bearing surface of the floor, the load bearing surface being the surface] a level down to which the pile of [the] a carpet [of] on the floor around the frame would [crushes] crush under normal usage loads.

14. (ONCE AMENDED) A floor structure [incorporating] including a floor segment, a frame as [claimed in any one of claims] set forth in claim 4 [to 11 wherein] supported by the floor segment, and a lid for closing an aperture in said frame, the materials and construction of the frame and lid [are] being such that the load bearing [capacity] capacities thereof [of the frame and lid is] are not substantially less than [the same as] that of the [surrounding] floor segment.

18. (ONCE AMENDED) A frame as [claimed] set forth in [any one of claims] claim 4, [to 17 wherein the] said frame [is] being rectangular and being arranged and configured to define [defines] a pivot surface [extending] that extends parallel to and is spaced inwardly from an inner edge of the frame which [inner edge] abuts the floor segment [deck] and defines [the] an aperture therein.

20. (ONCE AMENDED) A lid for use with an access panel for insertion into an opening [aperture] in a barrier [floor, wall or desktop or the like] facilitating access through the barrier to [for] cable services in communication with [an] said opening [through the barrier], said [the] lid including a hatch that is pivotally connected to a panel of the lid [, and moveable] for movement between an open position providing [in which there is] an aperture in the lid through which cable services may extend and a closed position where [there is] no aperture is provided, [the] said lid [being characterized in that] including a locking [means are provided] assembly that is adapted to be disposed between the hatch and [the] a frame portion of the access panel and is operable to selectively lock the hatch in place in [both the] either said open [and] or said closed [positions] position.

21. (ONCE AMENDED) A lid for use with an outlet facilitating access through a barrier to [for] cable services [through a barrier such as a floor, wall or the like], said outlet

being adapted to be seated [on or closely] adjacent a surface of the barrier and in communication with an opening therethrough, [the] said lid including a latch releasably securing the lid in a closed condition relative to the outlet and a hatch that is pivotally connected to a panel of the lid [and moveable] for movement between an open position [in which there is] providing an aperture in the lid through which cable services may extend and a closed position [in which there is] where no such aperture is provided, the arrangement of said latch, hatch and lid panel being such [characterised in] that when the lid is latched and the hatch is open, neither the lid [or] nor the hatch can be raised from a predetermined position by movement of cable.

22. (ONCE AMENDED) A lid for use with an outlet facilitating access through a barrier to [for] cable services [through a barrier such as a floor, wall or the like], said outlet being adapted to be seated-[on or closely] adjacent a surface of the barrier and in communication with a hole therethrough, [the] said lid comprising a [rigid] panel formed from a rigid structural material[, such as metal or engineering grade polymer] and an overmoulding formed from a flexible polymeric material, [the] said overmoulding defining at least one openable hatch.

30. (ONCE AMENDED) An access panel comprising a frame for insertion into an [aperture] opening in a [floor, wall or the like] barrier, [wherein the] said frame [defines] defining an aperture [around which] and including an upstanding rib which extends around the aperture, [wherein the edges of the] said rib [are] having a chamfered edge, [and wherein the edges of the] said access panel including a lid for the [access panel are] aperture having a chamfered edge formed from a flexible material, the arrangement of said [and are also] chamfered edges being such that [to provide] a substantially waterproof sealing fit is provided between the lid and the upstanding rib.

31. (ONCE AMENDED) An access panel for insertion into an [aperture] opening in a barrier, said [floor, desktop or the like, the] access panel including a floor frame defining an aperture having a plurality of sides, [and wherein] said frame further including structure defining a closed [well or trough is defined] channel extending along at least one side of the aperture.

32. (ONCE AMENDED) An access panel as [claimed] set forth in claim 31, wherein the [trough] channel extends along two sides of the aperture.

33. (ONCE AMENDED) An access panel as [claimed] set forth in claim 32, wherein the [trough] aperture includes at least four sides and the channel extends along four sides of the aperture.

39. (ONCE AMENDED) A lid for use with an outlet facilitating access through a barrier to [for] cable services [through a barrier such as a floor, wall or the like], said outlet having a base surface adapted to be seated [on or closely] adjacent a surface of a barrier and in communication with a hole therethrough, [the] said lid comprising a [rigid] panel formed from a rigid structural material, [such as metal or engineering grade polymer] said lid including [and] a hatch which is pivotally mounted [to] on said panel of the lid, the arrangement of the lid panel and hatch being [in] such [a manner] that the [hinge] hatch is pivotable relative to the lid panel about an axis which is located on an opposite side [above the plane] of the lid from said base surface.

40. (ONCE AMENDED) A lid as [claimed] set forth in claim 39, wherein [the pivot] said axis is located [above the] in spaced relationship relative to a load bearing surface of the lid.

MARKED-UP SET OF AMENDED PARAGRAPHS FOR SPECIFICATION

Paragraph beginning at line 26 of page 10 of the application as filed:

--Turning back to Figure 1, channels 22 run along the inner edges of the frame element [18] 16. As is best seen in Figure 3, the lip 24 of the channel [24] 22 provides a bulbous upper edge which projects inwardly from the channel 22.--

Paragraph beginning at line 29 of page 10 of the application as filed:

--The overmoulding 14 [12] is manufactured from a flexible polymeric material such as epdm or polyurethane. The upper edge of the overmoulding 14 [18] defines an upstanding rib 20 which projects above the flange 18 [10]. The outer edge of the overmoulding defines a flange 26 which is tapered and forms a ramp which is typically at an angle of from 1 in 10 to 1 in 20. This allows the floor finish such as a carpet, carpet tile or the like, to extend over the flange and abut the upstanding rib 20 extending around the central aperture of the frame. The upstanding rib 20 acts as an edge trim to the floor finish. A typical floor finish is modular carpet tile, and the rib is sized to correspond with the thickness of the bonding layer at the base of the carpet pile. Figure 3 illustrates the frame 10 located in an aperture in a raised floor deck 21 with carpet 23 extending over the flange 26 and abutting the upstanding rib 20.--

Paragraph beginning at line 22 of page 11 of the application as filed:

-- With reference to Figure 1, the main central area of the lid is formed from the steel plate as is an integral tongue 114 whilst the hatches 104 and 106 are formed from the flexible overmoulded material. The tongue may, however, be formed, wholly or partly, from the flexible overmoulded material. This allows the hatches 104, 106 to be linked with the lid panel 102 by flexible hinges formed from the flexible material.--

Paragraph beginning at line 4 of page 12 of the application as filed:

-- As is best seen in Figure 3, the underside of the lid defines one or more ledges 120 extending away from the opposite side of the lid to the hatches. The upper part of the ledge and the lower part of the lid define a curved generally J shaped bearing surface bearing or socket 121 [120]. In use, when the lid is placed on the frame, the socket engages over the lip 24 of the channel and this forms an open hinge which allows the lid to rotate about the lip 24 which acts as a fulcrum to either open or close the access panel. Further, as the ledge 120 [detent] engages under the bulbous lip 24, pressure on the underside of the lid does not cause the ledge 120 [detent] to be raised relative to the lip, as the lip acts as a barrier.--

Paragraph beginning at line 6 of page 13 of the application as filed:

--A tongue 114 extends away from structural core 110 of the lid and is integral therewith. On the free end of the tongue a cylindrical hinge shaft 128 is defined. The latch 108 is mounted on that shaft. The latch comprises a lever which was a generally C-shaped hinge barrel 132 on one end and two downwardly projecting flanges 134 each having a concave mouth 136 which is adapted to engage on the bulbous lip 24 of the channel when the latch is closed. The hinge barrel 132 is retained on the hinge shaft 128 by a snap in retaining clip 137 [136] which has a depending button 138 on its underside which projects through a hole 140 in the latch and the button engages against the hinge shaft 128 preventing the latch from dislodging from the shaft. The geometry of the arrangement is such that when the lid is closed with the latch locked, upward forces on the lid tend to force the latch into a tighter closure.--